IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims have been presented whether or not an amendment has been made. The claims have been amended as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method, performed by a returns provider, of enabling a customer to ship a package containing one or more items previously acquired from a merchant during a unique transaction, comprising the step of:

~~providing~~ **using one or more computer-systems to provide** the customer with a return label to be placed on the package, the label containing a shipping destination of the package and integrated machine readable data representing at least a shipping origin of the package and identification of the transaction**;**

using a shipping carrier service to transport the package to the shipping destination, the package shipped to the shipping destination using "reverse zone skipping" as the shipping destination is a carrier center near a returns center associated with the returns provider; and

receiving, by the returns provider, the package at the carrier center for transportation to the returns center.

2. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the returns provider is the merchant.

3. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the returns provider is a service provider to the merchant.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the return label conforms to ~~the USPS~~ **one or more USPS** merchandise return service specifications.

5. **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the providing step is performed by enclosing the return label with items shipped to the customer.

6.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 5, wherein the return label is attached to an invoice for the item.

7.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the providing step is performed by the customer downloading data from the Internet for printing the label.

8.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the shipping origin of the package is represented by the customer's postal code__, and the method further comprises assessing a shipping charge for the package using the customer's postal code as identified from the machine readable data__.

9.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the machine readable data is barcode data.

10.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the machine readable data is __electrical circuitry comprising a__ radio frequency ~~identification data~~ __identification tag__.

11.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the return label further has a human readable code representing merchant-specific data.

12.   **(Cancelled)**

13.   **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the returns provider maintains multiple returns destinations~~, and wherein the shipping destination is to a location closest to the customer~~.

14.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the purchase identification data is an invoice number.

15.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 12, wherein the machine readable data further represents merchant-specific data.

16.   (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the machine readable data further represents customer specific data.

17.   (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the machine readable data further represents product specific data.

18.   (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the machine readable data further represents trading partner data.

19.   (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the machine readable data further represents disposition data.

20.   (Currently Amended) A method of enabling a customer to ship a package containing one or more items previously purchased from a merchant during a unique purchase transaction, comprising the steps of:

providing **using one or more computer-systems to provide** the customer with a return label to be placed on the package, the label containing a shipping destination of the package and integrated machine readable data representing at least a shipping origin of the package and identification of the purchase transaction; ~~and~~

notifying **using one or more computer-systems to notify** the customer that, by using the return label, returns are pre-authorized and that carrier costs are due subsequent to the initiation of the return**;**

using a shipping carrier service to transport the package to the shipping destination, the package shipped to the shipping destination using "reverse zone skipping" as the shipping destination is a carrier center near a returns center associated with the returns provider; and

receiving, by the returns provider, the package at the carrier center for transportation to the returns center.

21.   (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the notifying step is performed at least in part by visual indicia on the return label.

22.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 20, further comprising the step of using the machine readable data to assess shipping charges.

23.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 20, further comprising the step of using the machine readable data to communicate information about the return to the merchant.

24.   **(Original)** The method of Claim 20, further comprising the step using the machine readable data to communicate information about the return to the customer.

25.   **(New)** The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

prior to receiving the package at the carrier center near the returns center, receiving the package at a first carrier station nearest the customer; and

using the shipping carrier service to transport the package from the first carrier station to the final destination at the carrier station near the returns center for pickup by a returns provider.

26.   **(New)** The method of Claim 1, wherein the carrier station near the returns center comprises a regional bulk mail center closest to a location of the returns provider.

27.   **(New)** The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

assessing a shipping charge for the package to calculate the shipping charge for transporting the package from a postal code associated with the customer to the regional bulk mail center.